

MINUTES
MICHIGAN STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING
May 24, 2001
Lansing, Michigan

Meeting noticed in accordance with Open Meetings Act, Public Act 267 of 1976.

Present: Jack Gingrass, Vice Chairman
Betty Jean Awrey, Commissioner
Ted Wahby, Commissioner
Lowell Jackson, Commissioner
John Garside, Commissioner

Charles Krupka, Commission Advisor
Jerry Jones, Commission Auditor
Vickie Plummer, Executive Secretary
Susan Keldsen, Commission Office
Pat Isom, Assistant Attorney General
Philip Kazmierski, Bureau of Urban and Public Transportation
Greg Rosine, Director
Barb Hayes, Chief Administrative Officer
Wayne Niles, Bureau of Finance and Administration
Tom Maki, Chief Operations Officer
Gary D. Taylor, Bureau of Highway Technical Services
Louis Lambert, Bureau of Transportation Planning
Douglas Novak, Office of Governmental Affairs

Absent: Barton LaBelle, Chairman

A list of those people who attended the meeting is attached to the official minutes.

Vice Chairman Gingrass called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. in the Bureau of Aeronautics Auditorium, Lansing, Michigan.

APPOINTMENTS

It was moved by Commissioner Wahby, with support from Commissioner Garside, to reelect Jack Gingrass as Vice Chairman. The motion carried on a unanimous roll-call vote, with Commissioner Gingrass abstaining from the vote.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Commission Minutes

It was moved by Commissioner Wahby, with support from Commissioner Awrey, to approve the minutes of April 26, 2001, as submitted. The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

OVERSIGHT

Commission/State Administrative Board Contracts and Agreements (Exhibit A)

It was moved by Commissioner Awrey, with support from Commissioner Garside, to grant approval to the Department to proceed with the contract process. The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Bid Letting Pre-Approvals (Exhibit A-1)

It was moved by Commissioner Wahby, with support from Commissioner Jackson, to grant approval to the Department to proceed with the contract process. The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Letting Exceptions (Exhibit A-2)

It was moved by Commissioner Wahby, with support from Commissioner Jackson, to grant approval to the Department to proceed with the contract process. The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Contract Adjustments

Gary Taylor, Chief Engineer/Deputy Director, Bureau of Highway Technical Services, reported on the contract extras and overruns, Exhibit B.

It was moved by Commissioner Wahby, with support from Commissioner Awrey, to approve the contract adjustments. The motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

PRESENTATIONS

I-275 Update

Greg Rosine, Director of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), reported that MDOT has done some grade-level noise tests, close to the shoulders on I-275, looking for variations of noise. The noise along this roadway was uniform and the timing was within the requirements of the contract specifications.

It was noted that Charlie Krupka, Commission Advisor, has contacted other states and the province of Canada regarding noise mitigation and the development of their noise policies.

Responding to the Vice Chairman, Director Rosine reported the Department will provide sound policy options to the Commission at their June 28, 2001, meeting. The options will include mitigating noise on new construction and expanded capacity.

Vice Chairman Gingrass commented that he would like to see a decision made as quickly as possible on the I-275 noise issue. Commissioner Wahby agreed and added that before money is spent, the Department needs to make sure it is the right thing to do to reduce the noise levels.

Responding to Commissioner Wahby, Director Rosine noted that the Department will also provide, at the June meeting, explanation on how to address sound wall policy throughout the state. This will include an understanding of the responsibilities of the state, of the developers who develop after roadways are built, and of the local units of governments for zoning requirements next to state highways.

Commissioner Awrey questioned how quickly residents near I-275 could expect relief if the Commission approved a policy on sound walls at their June meeting. The Director responded that he could not project time frames due to long-term investment issues.

Commissioner Jackson expressed concern that the Department has not provided the technical expertise necessary to explain any specific noise problem or to provide possible options or solutions to the I-275 noise issue, and believes there is a need to proceed quickly to come to a resolution. One relevant issue is who came first, the highway or the homes, aside from the 30 homes that show on the aerial photograph when the original road was under construction. If a determination is made that original construction of the roadway was the last time anything major was done to capacity on that corridor, then it sets up one set of precedents under existing policy. If it is determined that capacity of the road was increased by the reconstruction of I-275, or subsequent increase of the speed limit, it generates another approach.

Director Rosine responded that a matrix was developed by the Department with possible responses to the noise on I-275. One issue was to put down a layer of asphalt which would only provide a three-to-five level decrease in decibels, and which would not provide a noticeable change in noise level. Another issue is a reduction in the speed limit which seems to be unenforceable and which would affect I-696 and I-96 traffic, causing possible backups and delays on other routes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Nancy Bates, Mayor of Farmington Hills, commented that the I-275 noise issue has been studied for some time now and asked that a solution be found quickly to relieve residents within this area.

Sandra Carroll, a resident of Livonia, expressed her concerns that while studies are done on I-275, traffic volumes may be reduced due to construction within the area. She also expressed concern that when a sound policy is developed, future needs and impacts on families are considered.

Fred Welsh, a resident of Farmington Hills, noted results of noise tests on I-275 can be variable and expressed concern that measurements have been done with zero wind conditions. He also provided that air currents carry noise levels which cannot be experienced within a one-hour test, and asked that consideration be given to testing over several days.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Gingrass adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Commission Advisor